Early Learning Insights

Newsletter of the Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development

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About OECD

Alignment. Quality. Access.

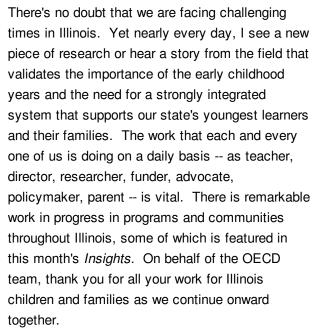
OECD leads the state's initiatives to create an integrated system of quality, early learning and development programs to help give all Illinois children a strong educational foundation before they begin kindergarten. Learn more.

New Resources

Partner Plan Act: Community Systems Development Inititative

CDC Child Obesity Fact

Dear Early Learning Partner,



October 9, 2015

Warmly, Theresa Hawley

Top Stories

Theresa Hawley

Executive Director



ExceleRate Illinois Awards of Excellence

We are thrilled to announce Illinois' first programs to hold the title of **Awards of Excellence**, the

highest honor in the ExceleRate system. These first awards were given in the area of Inclusion of Children with Special Needs to: Champaign Early Childhood Center; Stock School (Chicago); Carole Robertson Center for Learning (Chicago); Summerdale Early Childhood Center (Rockford); Fairview Early Childhood Center (Rockford); Dennis Early Childhood Center (Rockford);

ECDEC PFA/Eisenhower

Sheet

Infant Immunizations

Early Educator Central

OECD Initiatives

ExceleRate Illinois

MIECHV

Early Learning Council

Other OECD Initiatives
Below

Additional

Resources

For Early Childhood Educators

For Parents

Contact OECD

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Forward to a Friend

School (Prospect Heights); and Urbana Early Childhood School. Once an ExceleRate Illinois program has achieved a Gold Cirlce of Quality designation, it can work towards an Award of Excellence. Congratulations to each of these outstanding programs! For more information about the Awards of



Recipients of the Awards of Excellence

Excellence, contact Donna Nylander at <u>Donna.Nylander@illinois.gov</u> or visit <u>www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com</u>.

Creating an Unduplicated List of Early Childhood Sites

In an effort to understand how funding sources support quality, LEE Fellows Kelsey Connor and Ellen Moiani have nearly completed the first unduplicated list of all early childhood sites in Illinois, including capacity for licensed child care, Preschool for All, and Head Start. Ultimately, the purpose of this list will help us understand how funding sources support quality -- combined or in isolation. The OECD has formed a workgroup with our partner agencies to identify opportunities to use and build on this list in order to make system level modifications that can improve outcomes for children. For more information contact Bryan Stokes (Bryan.Stokes@illinois.gov).

Innovation Zones: Success in Greater East St. Louis and North Lawndale



Photo from mainspringschools.org

In eleven communities across the state, Early Childhood Innovation Zones are working to improve outcomes for young children as well as connecting vital information to state policymakers through feedback loops and systems. This month's *Insights* features

groundbreaking efforts in Greater East St. Louis and North Lawndale (a Chicago neighborhood), both of which have been working towards locally achieving defined priorities since the initiative began in 2013.

This spring, the Greater East St. Louis Innovation Zone launched their first community-wide screening campaign, which included alignment of intake forms in partnership with child care centers, Head Start, the school district, Early Intervention, and other groups, resulting in the referral of 305 children to home visiting, preschool, and other early care

and education programs. The North Lawndale Innovation Zone led two community wide outreach days, using common messaging to identify, recruit and enroll more than 100 families in early learning programs. They built partnerships with Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the Department of Children and Family Services' Teen Parent Services Network, a large health center and a homeless shelter using a centralized referral process to facilitate enrollment.

For more information, contact Leah Pouw at leah.pouw@actforchildren.org

Meet Kathy Stohr, Deputy Director of OECD

The OECD welcomes Kathy Stohr to the team as Deputy Director. In this role, Kathy will be working with OECD staff and the Early Childhood Interagency Team to ensure effective and efficient implementation of cross-agency projects, including Federal early childhood grants. Most recently, Kathy worked as a consultant with Illinois Action for Children, managing the Consortium for Community Systems Development. Kathy can be contacted at Kathy.Stohr@illinois.gov.



Kathy Stohr Deputy Director

Policy Corner

Children with Disabilitites to Gain Greater Access to Early Childhood Programs

The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released a joint policy statement on inclusion last month.

According to the Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs, "all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations."



In the News

Grants Spur Partnerships Between Two and Four Year

Colleges and Universities

Catalyst Chicago recently published an in-depth article about one of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge initiatives that is building capacity within the early childhood workforce. Read here about the impact of relatively small grants to Illinois universities to partner with community colleges to develop strategies that better align two- and four-year colleges and recognize the



Photo from citelighter.com

various pathways early childhood educators pursue towards a bachelor's degree.



Illinois Leads in Incorporating Social and Emotional Learning in the Classroom

A recent article from University of Illinois at Chicago researchers marks Illinois' revised Early Learning and Development Standards as "an important advancement for the field, particularly with regard to Social Emotional Learning" because of the clear and comprehensive learning goals and alignment across a common framework that extends through 12th grade. See <u>Early Childhood Research and Practice</u> for more details and a complete analysis

Does Pre-K Impact Third Grade Achievement?

A recent study of Tennessee's Pre-K program has raised questions about the link between part-day Pre-K and third grade reading and math skills. Linda Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

offers her perspective on a multitude of factors influencing 3rd grade outcomes and emphasizes the importance of creating a unified, cohesive education system beginning at birth and continuing through the elementary school years. Read her full statement here.



Photo from stateimpact.npr.org

Fast Fact of the Month

Are you looking for resources to help build and sustain powerful collaborations that can improve local community development systems? Check out the newly-revamped website www.partnerplanact.org at Illinois Action for Children and the BUILD Initiative's Community Systems Development Toolkit.

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